

## **Youth Investment Council Meeting**

### **Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 9:00am**

**Members:** Earl Wiggley, Anna Pepe, David Blevins, Sherri Goldberg, Joe Scott, Jeff Shalman, Lakeasha Carter, Victoria Gorman, Stuart Grant, Charles Hager, Evelyn Rosa,

**Staff:** Jane Brady, Jody Bramson, Shamar Spencer, Juan E. DeJesus, Hilda Alonso, Kenia Urias

Earl Wiggley, Chairperson, began the meeting with the introduction of all present members and staff. All members present confirmed that they had received the minutes from the previous meeting. All voted to accept the meeting minutes.

Jane Brady announced the retirement of Patti Seip, Executive Coordinator, effective December 5, 2013.

#### **Review of YIC goals for 2013-2014**

Mr. Wiggley reviewed YIC goals for program year 2013-2014, noting few changes from the goals for the prior program year. He reiterated that our overall goal is to continue to offer a coordinated, supportive network that would result in employment opportunities for the youth served by WIA.

Mrs. Brady stated that one of our objectives is to recruit more youth participants from towns other than New Brunswick and Perth Amboy. New Brunswick continues to be a priority, but Mrs. Brady emphasized our recruiting efforts in the rest of the county.

We are also working on reaching out to students who have recently dropped out of school. The program continues to receive drop-out lists from Middlesex County schools. The Coordinators contact the drop outs individually to offer them information regarding our youth programs.

In addition to letters sent; the Coordinators continue to promote the program by disseminating packets in person to the school counselors throughout the County. These packets describe services we offer to youth, including materials to be given to students directly when they drop out of school. At the present time Woodbridge High School has been the only school to allow group presentations to staff, though North and South Brunswick High Schools have been very receptive of our outreach. We will continue to foster positive relationships with all the schools in Middlesex County and expand our outreach to other public and non-profit agencies throughout the County.

#### **Concern on GED issues**

We discussed potential issues raised by the expected changes in the GED test replacing the old test throughout the State of New Jersey. A letter of concern was sent to the State regarding which GED test the State will adopt. The response given by the State was that a "Request of Qualifications" ("RFQ") was being presented to the State Board of Education this month and they will vote in December on which tests to adopt. Mrs. Brady reported that they are choosing between McGraw-Hill, ETS, and Pearson versions of the GED test. It is most likely the State will choose to accept all three tests, and each individual testing center will choose one of the three to administer and train their staff to do so. Testing will not commence until March, 2014, at the earliest.

Candidates who take the GED prior to January 1, 2014 and do not pass all sections of the test will not be given the option to retake individual sections of the old test, but will need to take the new test in its entirety.

### **Youth Visit**

Mrs. Brady informed the members that three Industry Tour visits for program participants are planned for this fall. Wakefern and Roosevelt Care Centers were completed. Labcorp had a previous date, but is being rescheduled due to conflicts.

The tours have been extremely successful. This was further demonstrated by a very positive news article that was distributed to meeting members.

### **Recommendation of YIC Goals for 2013-2014**

Harriet Slonim informed the board that many schools in Middlesex County assign a person to a liaison with homeless families that have students in their schools. We will receive more information about the program and in turn give her information about WIA Youth programs to be distributed to each liaison.

### **New Youth Follow up Policy approved by the WIB**

Mrs. Brady stated that previously, once a youth was terminated from the youth programs, additional funding for training could not be offered (even in the 12 month follow up period). A new policy from the federal government, subsequently approved by the WIB, offers youth in follow up additional services, including additional training if deemed appropriate. For example, if a youth is terminated because he becomes employed and then loses the position or is not able to secure employment within a reasonable timeframe after completing training, he could qualify for additional services.

### **New space in New Brunswick**

Mrs. Brady informed the members of the new space for the youth in New Brunswick. The space is equipped with a classroom that can be used for the orientation. Juan De Jesus, Youth Coordinator, stated that the youth have become comfortable with having "their own space." A tour of the Youth One Stop was being provided after the meeting.

### **Program updates by staff**

#### **Enrollment stats for MC4YOU NB youth programs activities: Juan DeJesus**

Juan DeJesus reported that, since July 1, 2013, he has 8 active participants in the MC4YOU New Brunswick program. Nine of them (including carry in's from the previous year) are in training, and one completed training and is currently in Job Search.

Juan also discussed his additional efforts to reaching out to youth who qualify for the McKinney Grant. This grant is a tri-county local grant that provides additional funding sources for homeless youth.

#### **Enrollment stats for MC4YOU Perth Amboy: Shamar Spencer**

Shamar Spencer, Youth Coordinator for MCYOU Perth Amboy, reported there are 7 active participants as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. There are 27 participants (including carry ins) currently enrolled in training grants, 9 of whom

have completed training and are in Job Search or had been referred to the MCWAG program.

#### **Enrollment stats for MCC youth programs activities: Jody Bramson**

Ms. Bramson reported that the MCC Youth Work Readiness served 12 youths since July, 2013. The goal for the Youth Work Readiness program is 15, so the program is doing well.

The MCC Perth Amboy GED program currently has 15 participants. In total 19 have been served; including 4 carry ins since July 1, 2013. The program is at 95% of their goal for half the year. As of October 21, 11 out of 19 passed the GED making 58% of the goal.

The MCC Carteret GED program has 12 active participants. 6 participants out of 12 in Carteret have passed the GED test. This means 50% passed the GED.

#### **Enrollment stats for MCWAG activities and industry tours: Hilda Alonso**

Hilda Alonso , MCWAG Coordinator, reported that she has 12 Participants (7 new and 5 carry ins) since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. Four participants were terminated; one received employment through the MCWAG program, 2 accepted job offers from other employers while in MCWAG, and 1 was terminated due to poor performance.

44 employers received outreach about the MCWAG program since July, 2013.

#### **Improved Orientation plans**

Mrs. Brady stated that either she or our Youth Manager, Mrs. Bramson, will be meeting with Rick and Shamar in order to improve the orientations for MC4YOU programs. Mrs. Brady recommended giving more interest assessments to each participant in order to verify whether a career choice is the right fit. In the past they have chosen careers without factoring in their life skills or interest. They may think they have interest, but perhaps they lack the particular skill needed for a particular career. Currently Shamar is using NJ Can as an assessment tool. This is a network based interest assessment for career exploration. Mrs. Brady is looking for more interest assessment tools. She also wants to identify websites which would be best suited for young adults.

Mrs. Brady suggested that there should be a one on one between participants and counselors. She also stated that the counselor should try to bring in more mentors to advise and provide information.

Mrs. Brady is working on incorporating the youth program presented at Boston and Middlesex County College into the Work Readiness curriculum to enhance orientations.

#### **Basic Computer skills**

Mrs. Brady informed the members that the participants will be receiving computer training in order to improve skills.

Mrs. Brady presented Kenia Urias as the new Youth Assistant. She will also be the instructor for the proposed computer training course.

Ms. Bramson stated that the curriculum used for the computer training will be one that Arthur Okwembo's IT Instructor at MCC employs in the MCC Youth Work Readiness program. The curriculum consists of 3 hours

of internet and 9 hours of Word, Excel and Power Point.

Mrs. Bramson informed the members that Kenia will be training with Arthur Okwembo while Juan and Shamar will also receive training to serve as substitute instructors when needed.

#### **Service level goals for 2013-2014**

The service level goals numbers were announced by Ms. Bramson. She reported that the overall goal for enrollment is 175. The goal for MC4YOU Perth Amboy is 50; MC4YOU New Brunswick is 40; MCWAG is 25 and 100 for all 3 MCC programs.

Ms. Bramson informed the YIC members that we are having difficulty in achieving our enrollment numbers. Middlesex County College seems to be enrolling participants much faster than the MC4YOU programs. Mrs. Brady reiterated the reason for MCC's higher enrollment numbers is the population being served: The majority of MCC's participants are high school dropouts pursuing a GED prior to training. The majority of youth served by MC4YOU programs have already received high school diplomas or equivalencies.

#### **Further Comments**

Mrs. Brady stated that the GED program currently at the Perth Amboy YMCA is possibly moving to the Middlesex County College campus in Perth Amboy. MCC offers more space and additional computer facilities. Mrs. Brady informed the members that we are in negotiation with the college and, if feasible, are looking to start the 2nd cycle in the new space.

The meeting was adjourned. The next YIC meeting is scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, at 9 a.m.